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AD-A242 423



PORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
3. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY OF REPORT	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) Technical Report No. 36	
5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION The University of Texas at Arlington	6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)
7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Office of Naval Research	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Center for Advanced Polymer Research Department of Chemistry, Box 19065, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX, 76010	
7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) 800 North Quincy Street Arlington, Virginia 22217	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) DARPA
9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER N00014-90-J-1320	
10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.
TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Separation of Neutral-to-Polaron and Polaron-to-Bipolaron Redox Events in Alkoxy Substituted Di-2-thienylphenylene Polymers	
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Andrew D. Child and John R. Reynolds	
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Technical	13b. TIME COVERED FROM 6-1-91 TO 9-30-91
14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1991 October 21	
15. PAGE COUNT 8	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION Accepted for publication in J. Chem. Soc., Chem. Commun.	
17. COSATI CODES	
FIELD	GROUP
SUB-GROUP	
18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) In situ EPR spectroscopy/electrochemistry, polarons, bipolarons.	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) In situ electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR)/electrochemistry methods have been used to elucidate the potential dependence of the presence of polaron and bipolaron charge carriers in poly(di-2-thienyl-2,5- diheptoxyphenylene).	
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS	
21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Dr. JoAnn Milliken	
22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (202) 696-4410	
22c. OFFICE SYMBOL	

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OCT 30 1991
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DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY/OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH

Grant N00014-90-J-1320

R&T Code a400008df

Technical Report 36

Electronic and Ionic Transport in Processable Conducting Polymers

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Accession For	
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Justification	
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Availability Codes	
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**SEPARATION OF NEUTRAL-TO-POLARON AND
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Accepted for publication in *J. Chem. Soc., Chem. Commun.*



October 21, 1991

91-14558



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Separation of Neutral-to-Polaron and Polaron-to-Bipolaron Redox Events in Alkoxy Substituted Di-2-thienylphenylene Polymers

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In situ electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR)/electrochemistry methods have been used to elucidate the potential dependence of the presence of polaron and bipolaron charge carriers in poly(di-2-thienyl-2,5-diheptoxyphenylene).

The identification of charge carriers in conjugated conducting polymers has recently received a great amount of attention.¹⁻⁶ It is generally accepted that the electrochemical oxidation of polyheterocycles leads to the formation of delocalized radical cations (polarons) and ultimately to delocalized dications (bipolarons).⁷ Studies involving the electrochemical oxidation and reduction of conducting polyheterocycle films have suggested that the generation of polarons, and the subsequent formation of bipolarons, occurs at essentially the same potential. The potentials of these redox events appear to be too close to allow them to be distinguished by voltammetry.¹ In situ EPR measurements carried out in an electrochemical cell have verified the presence of spin containing species (polarons) at intermediate doping levels in polypyrrole^{1,2,5} and polythiophene.^{3,6} The relative stability of the polaron intermediate has still not been fully elucidated; particularly in the case of polythiophene.^{1,3} The results for polythiophene vary greatly in both the population of spin species and the potential of maximum spin.³ Zotti et al have shown that the maximum spin concentration on the cathodic sweep of polythiophene corresponds to a low potential shoulder in the cyclic voltammogram.³ Variations in the electrolyte medium and temperature also resulted in a low potential shoulder on the anodic scan. Enhanced counterion mobility was therefore thought to lower the potential of the neutral-to-polaron redox event and allow for an observable peak separation from the polaron-to-bipolaron response.

Several polythiophene derivatives containing ether groups at the 3 position have been shown to display two distinct redox couples in their cyclic voltammograms.^{8,9} The presence of a relatively sharp initial oxidation of the polymer at a low potential is

characteristic of these polymers. The presence of these two separated processes has been attributed to ion transport phenomena where the oxygen atoms of the pendant ether groups increase the mobility of alkali metal ions. To date, no evidence for the formation of polarons at the first couple has been presented.

We have previously reported on the synthesis, characterization, and electronic and electrochemical properties of a new class of conducting polymers containing alternating bithiophene and phenylene repeat units.¹⁰⁻¹² The electrochemical and optical properties of these polymers are quite similar to polythiophene, however the ease of substitution on the phenylene ring allows for greater synthetic flexibility. Substitution at the 2 and 5 positions of the phenylene ring with long chain alkoxy groups results in highly conducting, soluble polymers.^{11,12}

Poly(di-2-thienyl-2,5-diheptoxyphenylene) displays two distinct redox processes with anodic peak potentials located at 0.27 and 0.61 volts vs. Ag/Ag⁺. Poly(di-2-thienyl-2,5-dimethoxyphenylene) exhibits only a single anodic response with a peak at 0.68 volts.¹¹ It is important to note that the second redox couple observed in the diheptoxy substituted polymer corresponds to approximately the same potential as the single redox couple observed in the dimethoxy substituted polymer. The new anodic peak is observed at a much lower potential and suggests structural influence from the longer alkoxy chain. Each couple has been shown to be independently reversible and chronocoulometry has determined that the same amount of charge is passed for each redox event. Electrogravimetry, carried out using an electrochemical quartz crystal microbalance has demonstrated that equal amounts of mass are also transferred for each couple.

The electrochemistry of this polymer is quite similar to the ether substituted polythiophenes^{8,9} whose peak potentials are within 70 mV of those reported above accounting for differences in reference electrodes. In order to assign the redox processes involved in charge carrier formation as outlined in Scheme 1, and the effect of applied

insert Scheme 1

potential on the spin concentration, in these polymers, we have carried out a series of simultaneous EPR/electrochemistry experiments.

Poly(di-2-thienyl-2,5-diheptoxyphenylene) films, *ca.* 200-300 nm thick, were synthesized by constant potential electropolymerization of 5 mM bis(2-thienyl)-2,5-

diheptoxybenzene in 0.1 M Bu_4NClO_4 in acetonitrile at 0.85 volts vs. Ag/Ag^+ . A symmetric derivative EPR signal was observed when the polymer was placed in an EPR cell with a platinum counter electrode and a silver wire reference electrode (-0.27 V vs. Ag/Ag^+) and cycled between 0 volts and 1.25 volts at 5 mV/s. The g value was determined using a diphenylpicrylhydrazyl standard and found to be close to the free electron value of 2.00232 at 2.0044. The line width of the signal is 2.10 G independent of the oxidation state of the polymer. In order to monitor polaron formation and decay, the magnetic field was held at the maximum of the derivatized signal and the polymer electrode potential scanned. The resulting current response and EPR signal intensity are shown in Figure 1.

insert Figure 1

The EPR intensity is inverted during the cathodic scan in order to allow comparison with the current response. The polymer becomes paramagnetic during the first oxidation process as evidenced by the increase in EPR signal intensity at 0.6 to 0.7 volts. A maximum in the EPR signal is observed at a potential just beyond the first current response which subsequently decays during the second oxidation process. The potential of maximum EPR signal intensity was verified by carrying out a potential step experiment in which the potential of the electrode was stepped in 25 mV intervals and the current response allowed to equilibrate. Both cathodic and anodic EPR peak potentials remained unchanged from the scanning experiment indicating no scan rate dependence up to 5 mV/s. This indicates that spin bearing species are formed at the first redox couple and dissipated at the second. The same is true during the reverse scan as the EPR signal reaches a maximum between the two current responses and returns to zero at low potentials where the polymer is in its neutral form. The signal is stable for at least an hour at its maxima indicating no decay of polarons into bipolarons and neutral sites. The polymer is not diamagnetic at 1.2 volts which is the highest potential the polymer can be held at without degradation. The EPR signal disappears when the potential is swept to approximately 1.5 volts which results in a significant decrease in the electroactivity of the polymer due to over oxidation.¹³ These results indicate that the two separate redox processes observed are due to potential controlled polaron and bipolaron formation and are not only an ion transport phenomenon.

Further work will focus on the quantitative effects of substituent length on the spin concentration and the potential of maximum spin concentration.

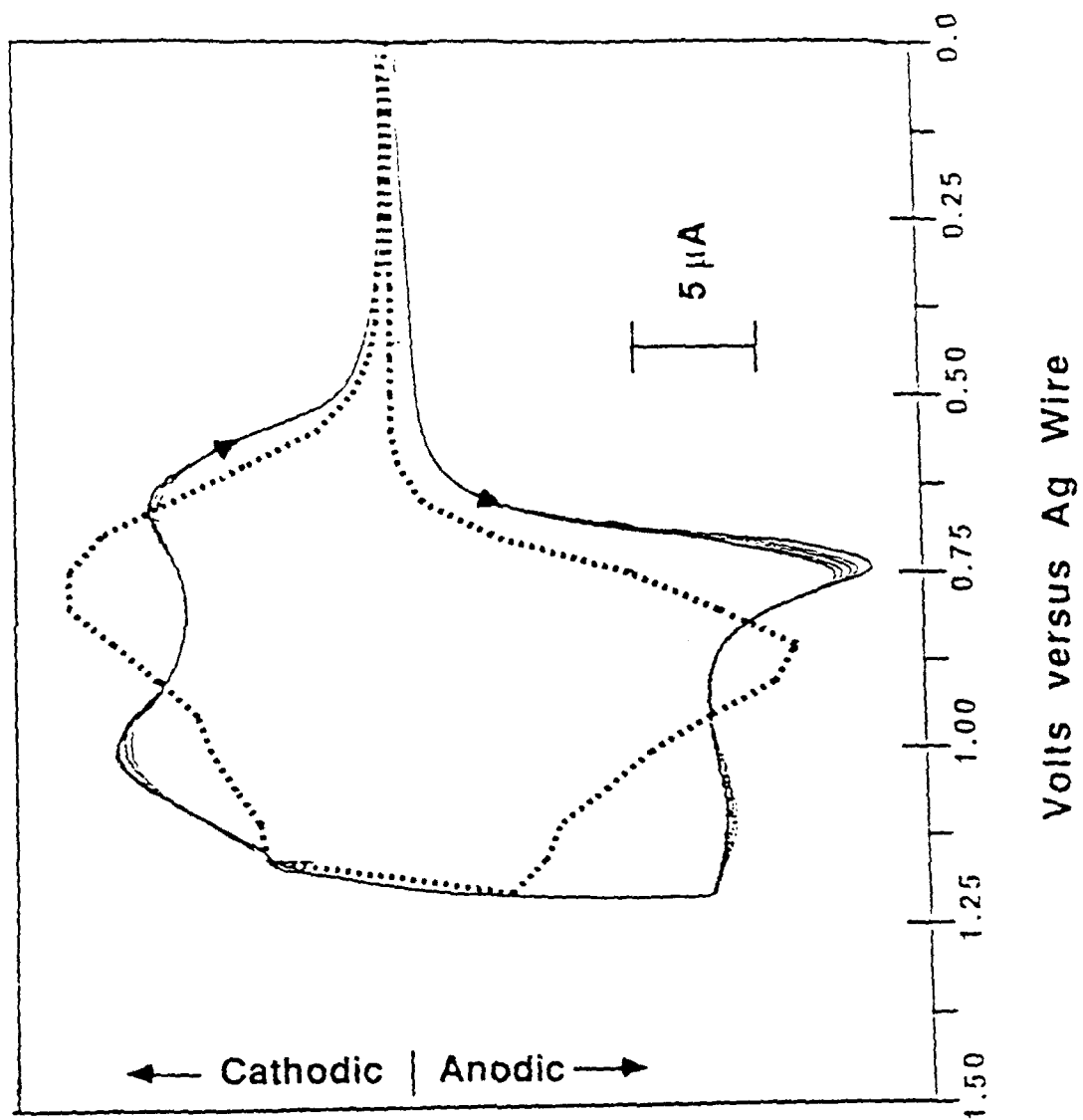
This work was supported by a grant from Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, monitored by the Office of Naval Research, through the University Research Initiative. We acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Jose P. Ruiz who prepared the monomer for this study.

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Figure Caption

Figure 1. Current (—) and maximum derivatized EPR signal intensity (-----) during a cyclic voltammogram of poly(di-2-thienyl-2,5-diheptoxyphenylene). Scan rate = 5 mV/sec, reference electrode is Ag wire.



Scheme 1

